

## Introduction

### Part 5

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#### Christ is the End of the Law? What does that Mean?

Many people today believe that Jesus (Yeshua) came to do away with the law based in part on what Paul wrote according to *Romans 10:4*. The question for us today though is “*what does that mean exactly that Christ is the End of the Law?*” What are the general conclusions that one comes to based upon this approach to the Torah? The Apostle Paul wrote in *Romans 10:4* saying “*For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*” Many assume that this means Yeshua did away with the Torah. This however is in contradiction to what Yeshua said concerning the Torah saying, “*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled*” (*Matthew 5:17-18*, <sup>17</sup>*Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι.* <sup>18</sup>*ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἕως ἄν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ, ἰῶτα ἐν ἧ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἕως ἄν πάντα γένηται.*). Regardless of what Yeshua said, many conclude based upon what Paul wrote that Yeshua meant something specific when he

said “*fulfill*” in regard to the Torah, that this means “*he fulfills the Torah so we don’t have to.*” I have heard this taught at the pulpit! If we look closely at the Greek text however, we see the word “*fulfill*” in verse 17 is the Greek word πληρῶσαι plerosai meaning “*to fill up, to fill, to the full.*” (Greek Lexicon: πληρόω,ν {play-ro’-o}, 1) *to make full, to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full 1a) to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally.*) The definition of pleroo shows that Yeshua was not saying that he would end the Torah but that His thoughts and actions perfectly embodied its intent. He kept the Torah and he taught Torah to all. In verse 18 the word “*fulfilled*” is from the Greek word γένηται ginomai (γίνομαι, ghin’-om-ahee} meaning: 1) to become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be, receive being 2) to become, i.e. to come to pass, happen, “to come into existence, to be,” etc. This is to say that the Torah will continue throughout God’s plan for mankind, it did not end 2,000 years ago. Yeshua himself state that He did not come to destroy the Torah. In fact, Yeshua went on to describe those who taught differently, saying “*Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*” (Matthew 5:19) This little exercise in the Greek text illustrates the significance of the problems involved in studying the Scriptures in a translation only as opposed to digging into the Greek and Hebrew texts. When we dig deeper into the Greek and Hebrew texts, we are able to learn a little bit more concerning the intent of what was said or written in the Gospels and the letters of Paul. Another important facet of studying a language that is not native to the reader is this causes one to think a little more critically upon the text, on its meaning, and ponder what the original intent for each word and verse.

When we study the Scriptures, we want to be as concise was possible in the sense that we are understanding the intent of the message. This becomes a little more difficult when we only use one language, which is a translation. It is important to note for example, the Greek language is ranked as the richest in the world with 5 million words and 70 million word types! Greek roots are often used to coin new words for other languages, especially in the medicine and sciences. This illustrates how important it is to study the Greek text as there are

many things the author may be implying by his choice of words. The English language on the other hand, Oxford English dictionary contains entries for 171,476 words, and Webster's third edition contains 470,000 entries. This puts the English language as slightly more concise from the sense that the author is limited in the vocabulary that is available to express what he wants to say. The Hebrew language has a vocabulary of half a million, but only 8,700 words making its writing much more concise as compared to the English and Greek languages. The point is, when looking at the Hebrew text, there will be nuances in the text, in the way that it is written, that may draw out some very important concepts that may be lost in the translation.

Let's take a little closer look at the text in Romans 10 from the Hebrew translation.

### **אל הרומים י / Romans 10:1-13**

אחי, משאלת לבי ותפילתי לאלהים – שינישעו.<sup>2</sup> מעיד עליהם שיש להם קנאה לאלהים, אבל קנאה שאין עמה דעת;<sup>3</sup> כי מאחר שלא ידעו את צדקת האלהים ונסו להקים צדקה משלהם, לא נבועו לצדקה של אלהים.<sup>4</sup> הגרי המשיח הוא תכלית התורה, כדי שיצדק כל מי שמאמין.

משה אמנם כתב על הצדקה שמתוך התורה "אשר יעשה אתם האדם וחי בהם."<sup>6</sup> אך כן אומרת הצדקה שמתוך אמונה: "אל-תאמר בלבבך מי יעלה השמימה?" זאת, כדי להוריד את המשיח.<sup>7</sup> או "מי ירד לתהום?" זאת, כדי להעלות את המשיח מן המתים.<sup>8</sup> אבל מה היא אומרת? "פירקוב אליך הדבר, בפיה ובלבבך." זהו דבר האמונה שאנו מבשרים.<sup>9</sup> ואם אתה מודה בפיה שישוע הוא האדון ומאמין בלבבך שאלהים הקים אותו מן המתים – גתושע.<sup>10</sup> הגרי בלבב מאמין איש ויצדק, ובפיו יודה וינשע.<sup>11</sup> והכתוב אומר: "כל המאמין בו לא יבוש." <sup>12</sup> אין הבדל בזה בין יהודי ללא-יהודי, כי אדון אחד לכלם ורב חסד הוא לכל הקוראים אליו,<sup>13</sup> שכן

“כָּל אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה יִמְלֹט.”

*10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. 10:2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 10:3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. 10:5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. 10:6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: 'Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), 10:7 or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).' 10:8 But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10:10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 10:11 For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.' 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 10:13 for 'Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.' (NASB)*

Paul opens in *Romans 10* speaking of His heart's desire and prayer to God is that his people would be saved. He then speaks of his people having a jealousy (zeal) for God but this zeal is not in knowledge. This knowledge he speaks of is pertaining to righteousness, that they do not know the righteousness of God. They only have a righteousness that they establish for themselves and are not submitting to the

righteousness of God. Then we see the key verse Romans 10:4 הָרִי הַמְּשִׁיחַ הוּא תְּכֵלִית הַתּוֹרָה, כְּדִי שֶׁיֵּצֵדֵק כָּל מִי שֶׁמֵּאֲמִין תְּכֵלִית meaning “purpose” is used to translate telos (τέλος). Paul’s heart desire is that his people would understand the righteousness of God, and states that the purpose of the Torah is the Messiah and clarifies what he means saying “in order that righteousness is to all who believe.” So what Paul is saying here is concerning righteousness that is by faith. He then goes on to further explain what he means. He says “Moshe truly wrote about righteousness that is in the midst of the Torah” (מֹשֶׁה אָמַן כָּתַב עַל הַצִּדְקָה שֶׁמִּתּוֹךְ הַתּוֹרָה) and quotes from the Torah saying, “אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם הָאָדָם וְחַי בָּהֶם.” saying “that he who does them will live by them.” Then Paul writes in a strange way saying, “מִי יַעֲלֶה הַשְּׁמַיִמָה?” זאת, כְּדִי לְהוֹרִיד אֶת הַמְּשִׁיחַ. “who will ascend to heaven? This in order to bring down the Messiah” and then “אוּ מִי יֵרֵד לְתֵהוֹם?” זאת, כְּדִי לְהַעֲלוֹת אֶת הַמְּשִׁיחַ מִן הַמָּתִים. “or who will descend to the abyss (deep)? this in order to raise up the Messiah from the dead.” The way Paul is arguing his position is in relation to righteousness. He speaks of his people not knowing the righteousness of God, and that they seek their own righteousness, and of how the Messiah is the purpose of the Torah, and how Moshe wrote about the righteousness that is in the midst of the Torah. What Paul is trying to argue is in relation to the righteousness that one makes for himself, as opposed to the righteousness of God. Is one’s own righteousness capable of ascending into heaven to bring down the Messiah or to go into the grave and raise up the Messiah from the dead? NO! Only the righteousness of God is capable of doing these things. We on our own have no power. Only the righteousness of God is powerful, and this comes by faith! Paul then speaks in *Romans 10:8* about the word being close to us in our mouth and in our hearts. He seems to be alluding to something Moshe wrote according to *Devarim / Deuteronomy 30:11-14* which states, 30:11 ‘For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. 30:12 ‘It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ 30:13 ‘Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us

*hear it, that we may observe it?* '30:14 *'But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it. (NASB)* Paul says, this is the word of faith that was spoken to us from the Gospel seemingly connecting to what is written in *Hebrews 4* concerning the people in the wilderness being taught the Gospel Message! Paul then speaks of faith and righteousness saying in *Romans 10:9* concerning confession saying, וְאִם אֵתָּה מוֹדֶה בְּפִיךָ שֶׁיֵּשׁוּעַ הוּא, וְהֵאָדוֹן וּמֵאֲמִין בְּלִבְּךָ שֶׁאֱלֹהִים הָקִים אוֹתוֹ מִן הַמֵּתִים – גִּתְּנוּשָׁע. speaking of the confessing with our lips that Yeshua is Lord, and believing in our heart that God raised him from the grave. This is connected to receiving the righteousness of God, saying that in the heart by faith a man is credited righteousness and by the mouth confession is made to salvation. Paul goes on to say that it is written in *Romans 10:11* that all who believe in him (in the Messiah) that he will not be ashamed. He then makes the statement about there being no difference between Jew and non-Jew, and speaks of the grace of God calling all men unto the Lord. He then speaks of all who call upon the name of the Lord will be delivered. (כָּל אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה יִמָּלֵט.)

The way the Hebrew translation is written the meaning of what Paul is trying to say becomes a little more clear. Paul is explaining to us the differences between the righteousness of God that comes by faith, as opposed to a form of righteousness that one makes for himself. The point Paul is making is not that the Torah is passed away, but that we are to seek the presence of God in our lives, that we would have a relationship with the Lord God of Israel, and this is achieved through faith in His Messiah, specifically that Yeshua is Lord and that God raised him from the dead. (*Romans 10:9*) It is the Lord God who is living inside of us and causing us to have the desire to obey His Word, to keep the commandments, etc. This is not a matter of our obeying the command in order to say that we are righteous. We are to look for and seek the righteousness of God through faith! And when we have that, our lives will be lived according to the Spirit, which will keep us from sinning, and cause us to live according to the Torah in righteousness, holiness, and truth. Paul originally wrote Romans in the Greek language, which does not always translate into modern languages in a readily understandable way. This is why it is so important for us to comparatively study in the original languages,

so that we are able to understand the intent of the Scriptures we are reading. It is unfortunate that the word *telos* is often translated here in Romans 10:4 as “end.” This gives the reader a different impression than it gave those who read the letter in Paul’s day. The word *telos* can be translated differently depending on the context. It can mean “*end result or ultimate fate*” (Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, 2006, “End”). It can also mean “‘the aim or purpose’ of a thing” (Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, 1985, “End, Ending”). The way *telos* may be translated as “goal” or “purpose” is clearly demonstrated by the way the Hebrew translation uses the word תְּכֵלֶת. As we study the Scriptures, one of the fundamental principles for interpreting the NT Scriptures is to look critically at all of Scripture, specifically to see how Paul wrote about the Law to better understand his view of it. One example is previously in Romans 7:7 he wrote that “*what shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For i would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘you shall not covet.’*” Clearly Paul wrote about the significance of the Torah for to define sin. Paul also wrote, “*Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good*” (Romans 7:12) and, “*Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters*” (1 Corinthians 7:19). Clearly his view of the Torah is not that it is done away with. Paul is saying that “*the Messiah (Christ) is the goal, purpose, or objective of the Torah*” according to Romans 10:4. Often Paul’s words are distorted and misapplied in an attempt to say that keeping God’s commands are no longer required. Nothing could be further from the truth than claiming that Paul was against the Torah of God. Even in Paul’s day it is written that there are those who twist what Paul teaches. Peter wrote: “*As also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures*” (2 Peter 3:15-16) It is unfortunate even today this practice of misinterpreting Paul’s words continues.



What does it mean then when Paul says that “*Christ is the end of the Torah?*” Let’s see what we know so far:

1. The Torah defines sin. (*Romans 7:7, 1 John 3:4*)
2. God’s Torah leads us to think and walk in Yeshua’s footsteps.
3. The Torah is paralleled to walking in the Spirit of God. (*Romans 7*)
4. Keeping the commands are important for God’s people. (*1 Corinthians 7:19*)

These few references reveal to us how the Torah defines sin, and how we are all deserving of death (*Romans 3:23, 6:23*), and that our own righteousness never measures up to God’s righteousness. (*Galatians 2:16*) The Torah leads us to understand our need for a Savior, something we have in the Messiah Yeshua. It is in this way that Yeshua is the end goal, the purpose, the objective of the Torah. This becomes clearer as we read what John wrote saying, “*He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked*” (*1 John 2:6*). The Lord God gave us His Torah so that we know how to live as He is living in our midst, in our hearts, and in our lives. God’s mitzvot (commandments) also teach us how to love one another, to do so by being selfless as we read in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 6* and *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:18*, “*‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*” (*Matthew 22:37-40*). The ten commandments outline these very things, and Paul is saying that these things are still binding for God’s people. The difference that Paul is teaching is in relation to our seeking the Lord God in heaven and His Messiah to help us to live according to His Word. To understand these things in a greater way comes by way of studying the original languages, and more importantly having understanding, the joy we receive when applying these truths to our lives! Therefore let us do what the Lord God Almighty and His Messiah Expects us to do, to live our lives for



Him according to His Word!

